The U.S. Foreign Language Deficit, the Language Enterprise, and the Campaign for Foreign Languages

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Abstract—Americans are among the least likely in the world to speak another language, and this lack of foreign language skills has a negative impact on the economic and national security of the U.S. and on the careers of individuals. In the U.S. the need for foreign language skills in the workforce is predicted to increase, and many positions requiring foreign language skills cannot always be filled. The need for an increase in foreign language skills in the U.S. and across the Anglophone world has been clearly demonstrated by a series of reports. A strategic social marketing campaign is needed, and in order for the campaign to be effective, the Language Enterprise, defined as the partnership of academe, government, and private enterprise, must play an active role. The "Many Languages One World" Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum is a noteworthy example of a high-profile event made possible by a Language Enterprise collaborative partnership. Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), especially Business Language Studies (BLS) represent an approach to foreign language education with the potential to transform both our classrooms and the future professional lives of our students.

Index Terms—foreign language deficit, language enterprise, "Many Languages One World," careers in language services, Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), Business Language Studies (BLS), campaign for foreign languages, foreign language advocacy

I. INTRODUCTION

According to a Gallup Poll, McComb (2001) found that only one in four Americans speaks another language, yet according to Eurobarometer (2006), 56% of Europeans report that they are able to hold a conversation in another language.

According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), only 18.5% of U.S. K-12 public school students study another language, and according to the Modern Language Association (MLA), only 8.6% of college and university students are enrolled in a course in a language other than English. In Europe, study of one or more foreign languages is generally required, and students typically begin their foreign language study at an earlier grade and age than U.S. students.

Yet Bloomberg (2011) has published a list of the most useful languages in global business, and English, Mandarin Chinese, and French head the list, and a myriad of research reports, books, and articles confirm the importance of foreign language skills for our society and for the individual, while foreign language enrollments in the U.S. declined precipitously in the 1970s and 1980s and have never rebounded sufficiently to keep pace with globalization.

A. The "Many Languages One World" (MLOW) Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum -- A Partnership of Government, Business, and Academia

In October 2013, the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) announced an essay contest to promote multilingualism as part of global citizenship and the study of the official languages of the UN in partnership with ELS Language Services, a Berlitz company, and host Adelphi University. Of the more than 1,400 applicants, who each had to write an essay on the importance of multilingualism in global citizenship, 60 full-time university students, 10 for each of the 6 official languages of the UN, were brought to New York in June 2014 where they presented before the UN General Assembly. The author was honored to have served as the French language facilitator, interviewing the finalists in French via Skype, coaching the winners as they prepared their presentations on the Adelphi campus, and accompanying them to the UN.

It is interesting to note that the MLOW winners included both students preparing for careers as language specialists and students from across the disciplines who were proficient in other languages. 8 of the 60 winners were from the United States, 3 from the United Kingdom, 3 from Australia, and 1 from Canada. 15, or 25% of the winners, were from countries where English is an official language.

There were many, many inspirational notes to MLOW, but the camaraderie and ease of understanding among such a diverse group of students representing so many nations was certainly remarkable, and an encouraging sign for our collective global future.

B. The Partnership of Government, Business, and Education -- The Language Enterprise

The status of foreign language skills in the U.S. has been part of the public and scholarly conversation for decades, with little result. Books, articles, and research reports have chronicled the decline of foreign language skills and study in the U.S. but although foreign language enrollments have stabilized and even increased somewhat, foreign language study and skills have never rebounded to the extent needed to keep pace with globalization.

While foreign language educators have long advocated for foreign languages, and business and government reports have examined the need for foreign language skills, a collaborative campaign is needed in order to effect the needed paradigm shift, driven by the Language Enterprise, the partnership of business, government, and academia, which has been exemplified by "Many Languages One World."

II. CAREERS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Preparation for a career, or for a pathway to success in the workplace is a significant aspect of foreign language education, yet many U.S. students are unaware of the wide range of career opportunities both for careers as language specialists and in careers that are enhanced by foreign language and intercultural skills.

The language sector is also larger than many U.S. students, and many Americans generally, may realize, and reasons for this include a perception that English is the global lingua franca and the fact that most Americans do not live in close proximity to an area where another language is the official language. While students are relatively aware that opportunities exist for foreign language educators, many fewer are aware the number and variety of opportunities available in the language services industry.

Rivers (2013) placed the number of people engaged in the language enterprise at "300,000 in the educational sector, 200,000 in the private, more in government," and its economic importance at "\$25b each year in the US economy."

Factors to keep in mind include the overall size of the language services industry, over \$35 billion globally, and 15 billion in the U.S. alone, as well as the number of U.S. companies in the top 10 (5), and the number of U.S. companies in the top 100 (30). Opportunities for foreign language educators vary from state to state, as foreign language programs and graduation requirements vary.

For those students eligible for European nationality or for employment within the European Union, it is important that they realize that the EU is the largest language services market in the world.

A. Careers as Language Specialists

Careers as language specialists generally fall into two broad categories: translators and interpreters; and foreign language educators.

According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, the median pay for interpreters and translators is well above the national average and that opportunities are projected to increase at a faster-than-average rate over the next 10 years. Careers in education also provide higher than average earnings, with the rate of growth for elementary school teachers projected to increase at the national average, while opportunities for high school teachers are projected to grow at a slower than average rate.

Selected data from the Occupational Outlook Handbook includes the following:

• Median Pay

Interpreters and Translators -- \$45,430.

High School Teachers -- \$55,050.

Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers -- \$53,090.

• Projected Rate of Growth 2012-2022

Interpreters and Translators -- 46% (much faster than average)

High School Teachers -- 6% (slower than average)

Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers -- 12% (as fast as average)

B. Careers Enhanced by Foreign Languages

Many U.S. students do not realize that, in addition to careers in language services and in foreign language education, foreign language and intercultural skills can increase both employability and opportunities for advancement in many apparently non-language-related careers.

While intercultural competence and cross-cultural skills are widely used, the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ), as defined by Livermore (2011), brings a more career- or marketplace-oriented perspective to this skills set.

Careers enhanced by foreign languages fall into three broad categories: those which benefit from cultural intelligence (CQ); careers in international business; and other careers.

A wonderful example of advocacy research is Risner's (2012) video.

C. Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

According to Livermore (2011), Cultural Intelligence (CQ), which is the ability to operate effectively across cultures and includes a broad range of skills, includes an aspect he refers to as "CQ Knowledge," which is where knowledge of other languages is most directly involved.

Cultural Intelligence can be applied to both global and multicultural situations in virtually any profession or business.

D. Careers in International Business

Any discussion of careers, including those requiring, or enhanced by, foreign language skills will generally include career paths within multinational corporations (MNCs), the import-export industry, and U.S. firms doing business in multicultural communities within the U.S.

Highlighting the importance of languages in international business, Bloomberg (2011) organization published a table of the languages most useful for international business, and the top three languages were English, Mandarin Chinese, and French.

It is interesting to note that the September 2014 issue of the Harvard Business Review features a cover on "Adapt Your Strategy to Any Location," and includes an article entitled, "What's Your Language Strategy."

According to Neeley and Kaplen (2014), "language pervades every aspect of organizational life. It touches everything. Yet remarkably, leaders of global organizations, whose employees speak a multitude of languages, often pay too little attention to it in their approach to talent management. (p. 72)"

Companies doing business internationally or within U.S. communities where other languages are frequently spoken can provide foreign language instruction on-site during working hours, fund relevant foreign language instruction taken at nearby colleges and universities, and link foreign language skills to additional compensation or to opportunities for advancement.

Exports have been closely linked to the U.S. economic recovery, and foreign language skills among employees According to the U.S Department of Commerce (2010), "export-supported jobs rose from 7.6 million in 1993 to 10.3 million in 2008, an increase of 2.7 million jobs. This increase accounted for 40 percent of total job growth in the United States during this period."

E. Business Language Education

Foreign language is a marketable skill, especially in international business, and the question of foreign languages concerns both business education and companies themselves.

The Bloomberg (2011) organization determined that the most useful languages for international business are: English; Mandarin Chinese; and French.

Paradoxically, a review by the author of the websites of the top business schools according to USNews revealed that even the most highly-ranked Schools of Business Administration in the U.S., (Harvard, Stanford, UPenn/Wharton, ranked at #1, and Chicago/Booth, and MIT/Sloan rounding out the top 5) do not generally require a foreign language for their MBA students. While they have developed and support a wide range of global experiences for their student, instruction is generally conducted in English.

However, support for foreign language education specifically oriented toward business applications is provided by the Centers for International Education and Research (CIBERs), the Language Flagship, the Network of Business Language Educators (NOBLE), and the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) Commission on French for Business and Economic Purposes.

The CIBERs were created by Congress in 1988, with the goal of promoting and increasing the global competitiveness of the U.S. There are over 30 CIBERs, which offer both education and assistance to business in developing their international potential. The CIBERs provide a model of excellence for education in international business for the nation's institutions of higher education.

The Language Flagship is a national initiative to develop foreign language skills in languages critical to national security, with programs at over 20 institutions of higher education to foster language skills in the ten languages determined to be critical to national security and to develop corresponding intercultural skills.

NOBLE provides information, support, and networking opportunities for foreign language educators interested in workplace applications of foreign language skills.

The AATF Commission on French for Business and Economic Purposes promotes the "expansion of business French at the secondary and post-secondary level, with the goal of creating a network of business French teachers.

F. Other Careers

Many careers within government, including local, state, and federal government, the military, law enforcement, judicial system, and the State Department offer careers opportunities that either require or prefer foreign language skills, or pay an extra stipend for foreign language skills.

Opportunities for medical interpreters exist and offer a real opportunity to save lives, and career opportunities for those with foreign language skills exits in the fine and performing arts, museums, publishing, exports, professional sports, and many other areas.

Whether you seek a career opportunity within the U.S. location of a foreign company, or whether you work in any industry seeking to do business, or to export products and services to another country, foreign language skills may be considered highly desirable, desirable enough in fact, to potentially give the employee with the relevant foreign language skills the advantage when other qualifications and experience are equal.

III. THE LANGUAGE ENTERPRISE AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES -- ADVOCACY IS THE ANSWER

The proposed campaign for foreign languages would bring together government, business, and education in support of foreign languages. However, while a united campaign is important, an effective campaign would also need to be strategic, using the theories and techniques of marketing for the greater social good -- the opportunity for U.S. students to acquire foreign language skills. It would need to be a strategic social marketing campaign, and it would be framed in best of current theory -- social marketing by Kotler, disruptive innovation by Christensen, change management by Kotter, blue ocean strategy by Kim and Mauborgne, and competitive strategy by Porter. The campaign would also need to be informed by best practices from around the world.

Foreign Language Advocacy in the U.S.

The following are a few selected examples of advocacy (in alphabetical order).

Adelphi University -- Host institution for MLOW (Dr. Robert Scott, President).

The American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) advocates for French language, with Commissions on Advocacy ("Tennessee Bob," Dr. Robert Peckham, Founding Chair), Cultural Competence, French for Business and Economic Purposes, and a Commission for the Promotion of French. It sponsors National French Week, each year in November, as well as contests, and offers grants. This author was honored to have been selected to speak at the Congres annuel in New Orleans in July 2014 on The U.S. Foreign Language Deficit and What We As Foreign Language Educators Can Do about It.

The American Language Enterprise Advocacy (ALEA)

The American Language Enterprise Advocacy (ALEA), an alliance of the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS), is an advocacy initiative launched in 2013.

The American Translators Association (ATA) -- is a professional association whose mission is to advance the translation and interpreting professions and the individual careers of its members. The ATA sponsors a school outreach program intended to promote awareness of the career opportunities available to students at all levels.

The Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBERs) --The CIBER program was created by Congress to increase and promote international understanding and global competitiveness. There are over 30 CIBER programs on U.S. campuses which provide education to on-campus students and impart best practices to other institutions. The CIBERs were created by Congress in 1988 to foster intercultural competence and global competitiveness.

ELS Educational Services -- The corporate sponsor (Mark W. Harris, CEO) of MLOW and part of corporate foreign language pioneer, Berlitz, which is a corporate member of JNCL -NCLIS.

Foreign Language Immersion Programs in Louisiana, Utah and Delaware -- Louisiana's French Immersion schools, Utah's Dual Language Immersion program, and the Delaware World Language Immersion programs are among the best examples of the growth of foreign language immersion programs in the U.S. and of foreign language advocacy at the state level.

The Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS) (Dr. William P. Rivers, Executive Director) represents professional organizations and the language services sector and advocates for language learning opportunities for all at the national level.

The Language Flagship is a national initiative to develop foreign language skills in languages critical to national security, with programs at over 20 institutions of higher education to foster language skills in the ten languages determined to be critical to national security and to develop corresponding intercultural skills. The Language Flagship has also most recently expanded to include K-12 initiatives and programs such as STARTALK and The National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y), sponsored by the Department of State.

The Modern Language Association (MLA) has maintained statistics on enrollment in languages other than English since 1960. In 2007, the MLA report, Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World, advocated sweeping changes in foreign language education at the postsecondary level and advocated for a partnership with k-12 foreign language education.

The Network of Business Language Educators (NOBLE) provides information, support, and networking opportunities for foreign language educators interested in workplace applications of foreign language skills. This author was honored to present a webinar in October 2014 on How Foreign Languages Can Give You the Professional Edge. (Dr. Mary Risner, Founder and Director)

The United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) -- UN sponsor of MLOW.

IV. A Brief Documentary History of the U.S. Foreign Language Deficit

According to the National Science Foundation (2009), of the 48,802 research doctorates awarded in the U.S. in 2008, only 627 were in the area of foreign language and literature, and between 1998 and 2008, the figure had fluctuated between 643 and 627.

The current public conversation of foreign languages in the U.S. began with the Presidential Commission report, Strength through Wisdom (1979), and shortly thereafter, Senator Paul Simon published The Tongue-Tied American (1980), opening the current conversation on foreign languages.

The events of 9/11 brought the lack of U.S. foreign language skills to the forefront of the public conversation. Many reports and initiatives on the importance of foreign language skills followed.

The Languages for All: The Anglophone Challenge (2013) initiative culminated in a conference in September 2013 and has served to launch a 5-year plan to promote and advocate for foreign languages in the United States. Although much has been written, and attempted, this plan is interesting in that it focuses on a specific 5-10 year plan with measurable goals and objectives and that it explicitly addresses the global Anglophone foreign language challenge.

The importance of foreign language skills in the United States has been confirmed by research reports, Senate hearings, and Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports.

Selected Documents

Senate Hearings

A National Security Crisis: Foreign Language Capabilities in the Federal Government (2012)

Closing the Language Gap: Improving the Federal Government's Foreign Language Capabilities (2010)

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports Defense Contracting: Actions Needed to Explore Additional Opportunities to Gain Efficiencies in Acquiring Foreign Language Support (2013)

Foreign Language Capabilities: Department of Homeland Security, Defense, and State Could Better Assess Their Foreign Language Needs and Capabilities and Address Shortfalls (2010)

Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls (2009)

Research Reports

Forging a 21st-Century Diplomatic Service for the United States through Professional Education and Training (2011)

What Business Wants: Language Needs in the 21st Century (2009)

International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future (2007)

Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World (2007)

Education for Global Leadership: The Importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security (2006)

The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (2005-)

Securing America's Future: Global Education for a Global Age (2002)

V. FOREIGN LANGUAGE ADVOCACY OUTSIDE THE U.S.

The European Union has embraced multilingualism as a core value and has promoted plurilingualism -- mother tongue plus two -- and the adoption of The Common European Framework of Reference for Foreign Languages (CEFR). Since 2001, the European Day of Languages, an initiative of the Council of Europe, has been observed on September 26th.

The United Kingdom has advocated strongly for languages. The current campaign for foreign language learning, a collaboration of the British Academy and the Guardian has included the publication of several major reports. Educational reform has included the expansion of foreign language to the elementary grades, a reform of the A-level exams, a re-examination of the GCSE requirements and curriculum, a new entry-level for the undergraduate foreign language major.

It is also important that the influence of British "soft power" on the role and importance of the English language as the global lingua franca be recognized. The key to British influence on foreign language education and achievement throughout the English-speaking world lies in the soft power wielded by Great Britain in the Anglophone nations and beyond.

We can -- and must -- not only learn from best practices, but join together with other English-speaking foreign language educators and communities around the world, who share -- to varying extents -- the foreign language deficit, to mount a unified campaign for foreign languages and to effectively address "the anglophone challenge."

The United Kingdom

The state of foreign language skills has been a recurring topic in the news in the UK for several years, and there have been efforts on all sides to effectively address the lack of foreign language skills among Britons and the worsening enrollment and achievement levels in foreign languages among British students.

The key to British influence on foreign language education and achievement throughout the English-speaking world lies in the soft power wielded by Great Britain in the Anglophone nations and beyond. Although the United Kingdom ranks #10 in the Global Competitiveness Index, London is generally considered the global financial center. According to QS Best Student Cities Index 2015 (2014), London is ranked #3 among cities for students, surpassed only by Paris and Melbourne, another Anglophone city. According to the QS World University Rankings 2014/15 (2014), 4 of the top 5 (with one tie) universities are in the UK.

According to the Monocle Soft Power Survey (2013), the United States (#3), United Kingdom (#2), Australia (#7), and Canada (#9) all figure in the top 10.

A noteworthy example of the Language Enterprise partnership at work in the UK has been "the Case for language learning" series in the Guardian and the annual Language Festival, launched in 2013.

The elimination of the foreign language requirement for secondary school students in 2004 is widely considered a pivotal moment in foreign language education, with a significant decline in enrollments in the subsequent years.

The National Curriculum published in 2013 provides for foreign language instruction beginning in the elementary grades to become mandatory in September 2014, and in April 2014, it was announced that the GCSE foreign language requirements would be revised effective 2016.

According to the Association for Language Learning (ALL), the new languages A levels are effective as of September 2016. New GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) content will be taught in schools from September 2016 for modern and ancient languages.

With foreign language enrollment rising and projected to increase significantly with the new requirements, challenges include the need for teaching training and a shortage of qualified foreign language teachers.

The important factor is that -- in the UK -- the reports and research have led to concerted action at the highest levels.

Recent British Reports include the following:

Manifesto for Languages (July 2014). All Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages.

Persuasion and Power in the Modern World - Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence (March 2014). House of Lords.

The Art of Attraction: Soft Power and the UK's Role in the World (March 2014). British Council.

Changing the Pace: CBI/Pearson education and skill survey 2013. Confederation of British Industry (annual).

Languages for the Future: Which languages the UK needs most and why (2013). British Council.

Lost for Words: The Need for Languages in UK Diplomacy and Security (2013). The British Academy.

National Curriculum (2013)

Languages: The State of the Nation (2013). British Council.

British Academy for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Language Programme (2011-) 5-year program.

Influence and Attraction: Culture and the Race for Soft Power in the 21st Century. (2010) British Council.

Higher ambitions: the future of universities in a knowledge economy (2009)

Language Trends Surveys (2002-). The National Centre for Languages (CILT)

VI. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR ANGLOPHONES

International education is a two-way street. International students come to Anglophone countries to seek English as a Second/Foreign Language education, as well as undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Many US students study abroad, in English rather than in the local language, and this author's doctoral research determined that undergraduate major programs in International/Global Studies typically recommended intermediate-level proficiency rather than advanced levels or fluency in one or more foreign languages.

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VII. SUSTAINABLE MOTIVATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING OUTCOMES

In order to get students into the foreign language classroom and to keep them there, motivation is essential. However, this is easier said than done when many consider English to be the global lingua franca, and when foreign language study begins later in the US than in many parts of the world, and with less time and intensity devoted to foreign language study.

Supposing that sequential programs exist and that students are enrolled, the question of sustainability of motivation arises due to the time and effort needed to achieve the long term goal of foreign language proficiency or fluency.

While workplace and career opportunities are often stated as the most powerful reasons for foreign language study, research has demonstrated that cultural affinity is the most powerful motivator and predictor of successful foreign language learning outcome. However, the challenge is to create and maintain motivation in a U.S society with a tradition of lack of interest in other languages and cultures, and to sustain motivation through the inevitable plateaus in language learning in a society focused on short-term results and satisfaction.

VIII. FUTURE NEEDS -- THE CAMPAIGN FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The campaign for foreign languages needs to be strategic, incorporating the best theory and practice in foreign language teaching and learning around the world, as well as inspirational theory from the business literature -- change management from Kotter, strategic social marketing from Kotler, blue ocean strategy from Kim and Mauborgne, disruptive innovation from Christensen, and the competitive advantage from Porter.

In addition, the campaign for foreign languages needs to learn from best practices, as advocated by Pufahl and Rhodes, and the MLA in its 2007 report, Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World. The campaign for foreign languages also need to embrace the Language Enterprise partnership, as stunningly exemplified by "Many Languages One World" (MLOW). In the UK, the Language Enterprise has been effective, as in "the case for language learning" and the British Academy's language programme.

The British Council and the Alliance Française are global examples of successful initiatives of this nature.

IX. CONCLUSIONS -- THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF ADVOCACY RESEARCH

The way forward is clear. Learning from the scholarly literature and best practices is essential, but the key is a unified global campaign for foreign languages across the Anglophone world, inspired by both best practices and successes in the UK and the global literature on innovation, strategy, and social marketing.

It is also essential that foreign language advocacy become part of the scholarly conversation on foreign language.

There are encouraging signs, however. The ACTFL Year of Languages in 2005, the Council of Europe's European Day of Languages, celebrated on September 26th each year since 2001, and the UN International Year of Languages in 2008, the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) National French Week in November each year, the ACTFL Discover Languages Month each February, and many more.

Most encouraging are the Language Enterprise campaign in the UK, including the British Academy's Language Programme, the "case for language learning," Language Festival, and the "Many Languages One World" (MLOW) Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum at the United Nations, whose purpose was to promote multilingualism and the study of the official languages of the UN.

X. CONCLUDING THOUGHT -- "LANGUAGES FOR ALL?"

"In recent years, much of the discussion regarding foreign language education has centered on its perceived benefits: a more robust economy, stronger national security, improved cognitive ability, and advantages in college admissions and the job market, just to name a few. Recent surveys show that <u>85 percent of American adults now believe</u> that it is important for youth to learn a second language, yet <u>79 percent of Americans are still monolingual</u>. It's time to shift the discussion from 'Why should we learn a second language?' to 'Why aren't we learning languages?'".

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